



BUY IT • SELL IT • FIND IT

CATS

RECRUIT



Executive Appointments: toll free 1800-289-8822 • Classified Jobs: 1800-289-9988 • www.st701.com

# Get the write edge

Stand out by putting your personality into your message

LOOK around your workplace. Do the leaders in your organisation write effectively and powerfully? Do good writers tend to get promoted? Do people tend to listen to good writers? Are good writers able to persuade or convince effectively? Absolutely, yes, yes, and yes again!

More and more of our work today is undertaken in writing rather than in person or on the phone.

Indeed, I wish that wasn't true. Certain issues can be resolved much more quickly by picking up the phone or speaking face-to-face.

However, as we do write so much these days, we depend on our writing skills to influence, persuade, encourage, collaborate and lead.

Unfortunately, we rarely hear people talking about the importance of good writing in day-to-day work. Most people don't really notice the quality of the writing they read – they simply react positively, negatively, or not at all.

If you have ever wondered if there is a better way to write your messages so they get better results, there is! Here are three new rules for written communication:

## 1 If you can say it, you can write it

We connect with the world today largely through e-mail, websites, blogs, texting and social media. These channels give us bare facts, without tone of voice, facial expressions, body language or pauses.

When you use such media, it makes sense to write in a way that is as close as possible to spoken language. When you do this, you gain a great advantage – you put your personality and individuality into your message. This helps you to stand out more and makes a greater connection with your reader.

## 2 Write for today, not yesterday

Yesterday: "Please be advised that a meeting of the Annual

Convention Committee will be held on Feb 24 (Tuesday) at 9.30am. Approximately two hours will be required for the meeting and you are required to attend to report on progress made since the last meeting. Kindly advise me of your availability at your soonest."

### Today:

"I'd like to hold another meeting of the Annual Convention Committee on Tuesday Feb 24 from 9.30 to 11.30 am. I hope you can attend to report on the great ideas you brought up at the last meeting. Please confirm if you can join us."

Yesterday's writing is passive, wordy and dull. It puts a distance between you and the reader. It slows down understanding.

Today's writing sounds more conversational. It's crisp and clear, and the personal context makes it more positive and interesting.

## 3 Build relationships

In writing, as readers can't see or hear you, people judge you based on what you write and how you write it.

In this fast-paced, communication-crazy world, it is essential to come across as a human being.

If you insist on using old-fashioned or redundant jargon (for example, "Please be reminded", "Kindly be advised", "Please find attached herewith", "above-mentioned", "reference" and "perusal") you will obscure both the meaning and your real personality.

Make your writing positive, stimulating and interesting; add some feeling and a personal touch. This will help people get to know the real person behind the message.

## Poor writing damages reputations

Poorly written messages reflect badly on you and your organisation.

It will not clarify an organisation's products,

services, values, policies and beliefs; it may even portray them negatively.

As a result, business efficiency is lost, as are opportunities to connect and build relationships with clients, colleagues and collaborators.

## Good writing makes a difference

Good writing is receiving increasing recognition as an essential business skill. It will give you a huge advantage in today's business world.

Good writing can help you work more efficiently, build credibility, improve relationships, influence other people, win more clients and achieve your goals.

So take another look around your workplace. Look objectively at the messages you receive and the messages you send.

Are they full of yesterday's jargon or today's conversational expressions?

Will they help to enhance your professional reputation or ruin it? Will they help to build relationships or break them?

Give yourself an edge in this competitive world by getting to grips with effective writing now.

Article by Shirley Taylor. She is a speaker, trainer and author on business communication and writing skills. Website: [www.shirleytaylortraining.com](http://www.shirleytaylortraining.com)

Learn more about this and other related topics at the Communication: Your Key to Success workshop organised by ST701 on Feb 17. To register, log on to [jobs.st701.com/seminar](http://jobs.st701.com/seminar). ST701 members enjoy special prices (membership is free). Sign up now for early bird prices.

To send article contributions, comments, views and story ideas, e-mail [recruit3@sph.com.sg](mailto:recruit3@sph.com.sg)

When you contribute to CATS Recruit in The Straits Times, we take it that you agree, at no charge, to allow us to use, archive, resell or reproduce the letters and contributions in any way and in any medium.

